

# ARTFORUM

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— *Tausif Noor*

## CRITICS' PICKS

## London

**Mat Collishaw**

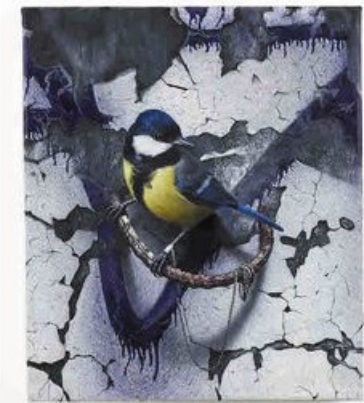
BLAIN|SOUTHERN

4 Hanover Square

April 7–May 27

It is an uncanny ability of British men to wax cerebral about matters of sex. In his early seventies, the writer Kingsley Amis expressed gratitude for losing his libido because it had felt like being shackled to a moron for half a century. And David Attenborough's popularity seems to lie in his clipped, dry descriptions of the mating rituals and sexual habits of birds. In his latest exhibition here, Mat Collishaw considers how sexual desire is rooted largely in subterfuge. Drawing on the evolutionary psychologist Geoffrey Miller's theory that consumerism is an extension of the need to attract sexual partners, Collishaw takes a macabre approach to the illusionistic activities of the natural world.

*The Centrifugal Soul*, 2016, is an animation device that uses strobe lights and rapid motion to create moving images—a contemporary version of the Victorian zoetrope. Bowerbirds and birds-of-paradise open and shut their plumage; hummingbirds suck intently from blooming flowers in a frenzy of activity. In *Albion*, 2017, Collishaw projects an image of the Major Oak, a thousand-year-old tree supported by an elaborate scaffolding system in Nottinghamshire's Sherwood Forest. Created from laser scans, the image rotates almost imperceptibly in front of the viewer, an eerie, spectral presence in the gallery space. Rounding out the exhibition is a series of paintings titled "GASCONADES," 2017, which draw from Carel Fabritius's 1654 painting *The Goldfinch*. In them, blue tits, robins, goldcrests, and assorted finches are chained to perches that sit against peeling plaster and stucco marred by graffiti; their bright feathers blend in with the lurid colors of their urban environments. Here, as in the other works, vibrancy is tinged with death—call it British wit.



Mat Collishaw, *GASCONADES (KillingIt)*, 2017, oil on canvas, concrete, jesmonite, 14 x 12 x 2". From the series "GASCONADES," 2017.

— Tausif Noor